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E.O. 12958: DECL: 06/19/2018
TAGS: [CA](#) [ECON](#) [ENRG](#) [IZ](#) [OPRC](#)
SUBJECT: IRAQ YELLOWCAKE SALE TO CAMECO: USG PUBLIC
AFFAIRS STRATEGY

Classified By: WHA DAS Roberta S. Jacobson
for reasons 1.4 (a), (b), (d), and (f).

SUMMARY

¶1. (S) Cameco's 550 metric tons of natural uranium purchased from Iraq will reach the port of Montreal on/about July 3. This action request seeks to ensure the Government of Canada (GOC), Cameco, and the USG have synchronized our public affairs and legislative briefing timelines and messages. End summary.

OBJECTIVES

¶2. (S/REL CAN) The interagency-approved press points will be sent to Post via e-mail. Drawing from those points as well as the information in the background paragraph, Post is requested to discuss the USG public affairs strategy for this operation with appropriate officials in the GOC and Cameco. Post may also discuss with both parties the following timeline:

--Week of June 23: U.S. officials will provide a classified brief to congressional staffers concerning the entire operation including identifying the buyer and destination country, preferably June 26-27;

--July 1: AP reporter Bryan Murphy (see background notes) will come to Washington for an unclassified background brief on the operation and access to senior officials for interviews;

--July 5: Murphy will receive USG clearance to publish his story on the operation (assuming the material has reached its final destination);

¶3. (S/REL CAN) During discussions of the U.S. public affairs strategy with both Cameco and the GOC, Post should seek their respective strategies as well. The interagency is especially interested in the timeline for any press statements, government briefings, or publicity that the Canadian parties might have planned and strongly prefers no announcements until after the ownership title has been transferred.

REPORTING DEADLINE

¶4. (U) Post is requested to report the results of these discussions to Washington as soon as possible to provide sufficient time for response to any Canadian requests.

BACKGROUND

¶5. (S/REL CAN) Canadian corporation Cameco made a successful bid on 550 metric tons of natural uranium for sale by the Government of Iraq. At Iraq's request, the U.S. Departments

of Defense and Energy packaged and transported that material out of Iraq at USG expense as a counter-proliferation measure. The material is scheduled to arrive in Montreal by ship on July 3. During the 18-month planning and execution process, kept strictly classified for operational security reasons, information has occasionally leaked to the media. Noted AP writer Brian Murphy was inadvertently included in a high-level meeting on this subject in late September 2007 while working as an embedded reporter in Kuwait. Murphy has scrupulously cooperated with USG requests to refrain from publishing any story with the understanding that he would be briefed in full towards the conclusion of the operation.

POINTS OF CONTACT

16. (U) Post should slug any response cables to Jody Daniel of ISN/RA (phone number 202-647-9486) and Seth Schleicher of NEA/I-PM (phone number 202-647-6172).

RICE